

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

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FM AMEMBASSY KIGALI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3055

INFO AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

S E C R E T KIGALI 0406

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS RW

SUBJ: ANCIEN REGIME FIGURES: DEATH SENTENCES COMMUTED

REF: KIGALI 0400

1. COMMUTATION DEATH SENTENCES: DURING JULY 5 RADIO ADDRESS (BEING REPEATED THROUGHOUT DAY ON FIRST ANNIVERSARY COUP D'ETAT), PRES HABYARIMANA ANNOUNCED DECISION COMMUTE DEATH SENTENCES FORMER PRES KAYIBANDA AND OTHERS TO LIFE IMPRISONMENT. SPEECH CASTIGATED KAYIBANDA AND FORMER ASSOCIATES FOR BRINGING RWANDA TO STAGNATION, DISUNITY AND VIRTUAL DESTRUCTION, BUT DECISION TO COMMUTE SENTENCES MADE IN SPIRIT RECOGNIZING JULY 5 AS DAY OF "REFLECTION AND NATIONAL RECONCILIATION".

2. FIRST ANNIVERSARY: MOST OF SPEECH DEALT WITH "BALANCE SHEET" SECOND REPUBLIC IN CONTRAST TO SITUATION EXISTING WHEN ARMY TOOK POWER. PRIMARY EMPHASIS GIVEN TO REANIMATION NATIONAL AND LOCAL ADMINISTRATION, ARMY DISCIPLINE AND TRAINING, AND BACK TO WORK CAMPAIGN BY POPULATION--ALL IN SUPPORT PRIMARY NATIONAL GOAL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT. IN FIRST OFFICIAL COMMENT ON MATTER, PRESIDENT ANNOUNCED ESTIMATE POLITICAL
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ACTIVITIES MIGHT BE RESTORED IN 1978. HE CITED PROPOSED

EDUCATION REFORM AND ITS PRINCIPLES AS IMPORTANT TO GOR GOALS, BUT NOTED PROPOSAL CURRENTLY BEING "CORRECTED".

COMMENTS ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS WERE GENERAL AND INCLUDED REFERENCE GOR POLICY RESTORING GOOD RELATIONS WITH ITS NEIGHBORS WHERE CONFLICTS HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN FOMENTED, IMPORTANCE OF REGIONAL COOPERATION PROJECTS (PROBABLY LAKE KIVU METHANE GAS), INCREASED FOREIGN ASSISTANCE, INTEREST IN THIRD WORLD PROBLEMS AND GOR INITIATIVE IN LAUNCHING TRIPARTITE MEETINGS ("RICH IN PROMISE"). HE ACKNOWLEDGED, HOWEVER, THAT OVER-ALL BALANCE SHEET WAS ONLY "LARGELY POSITIVE" AND REALITIES OF SOME RWANDAN PROBLEMS HAD "EXCEEDED OUR HOPES".

3. COMMENT: DECISION ON KAYIBANDA AND HIS ASSOCIATES IS STATESMANLIKE ACT WHICH APPEARED BE ONLY RATIONAL COURSE. TO HAVE ACTED OTHERWISE WOULD HAVE BEEN GRIEVOUS POLITICAL ERROR. HOWEVER, THERE WAS ALSO HUMAN FACTOR OF CURRENT MILITARY LEADERS HAVING ONLY ESCAPED DEATH BY CHANCE AND A DESIRE TO METE OUT RETRIBUTION.

4. BELGIAN AMB UNDER INSTRUCTIONS CALLED ON PRES HABYARIMANA JULY 3 TO NOTE IMPORTANCE CLEMENCY. FRENCH AMB (WITHOUT INSTRUCTIONS) ADVISED SEVERAL KEY GOR LEADERS AGAINST EXECUTIONS ON GROUNDS ADVERSE REACTION IN FRANCE AND POSSIBLE EFFECT ON FRENCH ASSISTANCE. OVER PAST SEVERAL DAYS, I NOTED ON PERSONAL BASIS POINTS CONTAINED PARA 3 REFTEL TO SEC GEN PRESIDENCY AND MEMBER RULING COMMITTEE BUREGEYA, PROSECUTOR-GENERAL KAVARUGANDA, AND SURETE CHIEF LIZINDE. I ALSO SPOKE WITH FONMIN NSEKALJE AT JULY 4 RECEPTION WHO LISTENED INTENTLY, SAID HE DID NOT KNOW HOW PRESIDENT WOULD DECIDE, BUT WOULD CONVEY MY VIEWS TO PRESIDENT LATER THAT EVENING. I SUSPECT, HOWEVER, THAT COMMUTATION DECISION HAD ALREADY BEEN MADE.

5. PARAS 1 AND 2 UNCLASSIFIED. FULL TEXT OF SPEECH WILL BE POUCHED WHEN AVAILABLE.
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